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N V RAMANA APPOINTED NEXT CJI, TO TAKE OATH ON APRIL 24

Senior-most Supreme Court judge Justice Nuthalapati Venkata Ramana was on Tuesday appointed as the next Chief Justice of India

TO REMAIN CHIEF JUSTICE TILL AUGUST 26, 2022

Justice Ramana will take over as the 48th CJI on April 24 and will retire on August 26, 2022. He has dealt with several high-profile cases in the apex court. A five-judge Constitution bench headed by him had, in March last year, declined to refer to a larger seven-judge bench a batch of pleas challenging the Constitutional validity of the Centre's decision to abrogate Article 370

WAS CHIEF JUSTICE OF DELHI HC FOR A YEAR

Born on August 27, 1957 into an agricultural family in Andhra, Ramana was enrolled as an advocate on February 10, 1983. He was appointed a permanent judge of the AP High Court on June 27, 2000, elevated as the Chief Justice of Delhi HC on September 2, 2013 and appointed a Supreme Court judge on February 17, 2014

APRIL 23

WHEN INQUIRY CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA CHARGES APPOINTMENT WILL BE SET

ASSAM, KERALA POLL OVER, SPORADIC VIOLENCE IN WEST BENGAL PHASE-III

TMC, BJP candidates heckled by workers of each others' parties; Sabarimala issue in spotlight

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Kolkata/Guwahati/Kochi

AMID sporadic violence and high voter turnout, the third of the eight-phase West Bengal elections concluded on Tuesday in three southern districts, known to be the ruling Trinamool's forts. In Assam, polling in the third and final phase crossed 80 per cent and the process was by and large peaceful although there were some stray incidents of violence.

Kerala recorded a high voter percentage (74.02 pc), though it was a tad less than the previous Assembly elections in 2016 (77.35 pc).

In West Bengal, actor-turned-BJP candidate Papia Adhikary in Uluberia South was man-handled by alleged Trinamool supporters when she went to meet an injured party worker in a hospital.

On the other hand, Trinamool candidate Sujata Mondal in Arambagh, Hooghly, wife of BJP MP Saumitra Khan from

Bishnupur, who defected to the ruling party two months ago, was surrounded and chased away by alleged BJP supporters. Her security guard too was allegedly assaulted.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee alleged that the Central forces were intimidating her party's workers and accused the Election Commission of having turned a blind eye to it.

In Assam, the police had to use force when two groups of people clashed over some issues at a polling station in Golakganj constituency in Dhubri district. At Guptipara in Bilasipara West constituency, also in Dhubri district, a group of people attacked security personnel over the distribution of free masks. The police restored order by resorting to caning.

In Kerala, the Sabarimala issue dominated the day's political discourse, with the LDF and the UDF trading charges over whom Lord Ayyappa would support during polling.



4EVMs, 4 VVPAT machines found at Trinamool leader's house, poll official suspended



Voters queue up at a polling station during the third and final phase of Assam Assembly elections, in Guwahati on Tuesday | PTI

Tamil Nadu records near 72 pc polling

ANBUSELVAN @ Chennai

THE sudden surge in Covid cases over the past several weeks did not prevent Tamil Nadu from coming out to choose its next government, as the State recorded 71.79 pc polling, largely in keeping with the tradition of staying well above the 70-mark. In 2011 and 2016, the State recorded an impressive voter turnout of over 78 pc and 74 pc respectively. Of the 6.29 crore

eligible voters in the State, 4.51 crore exercised their franchise.

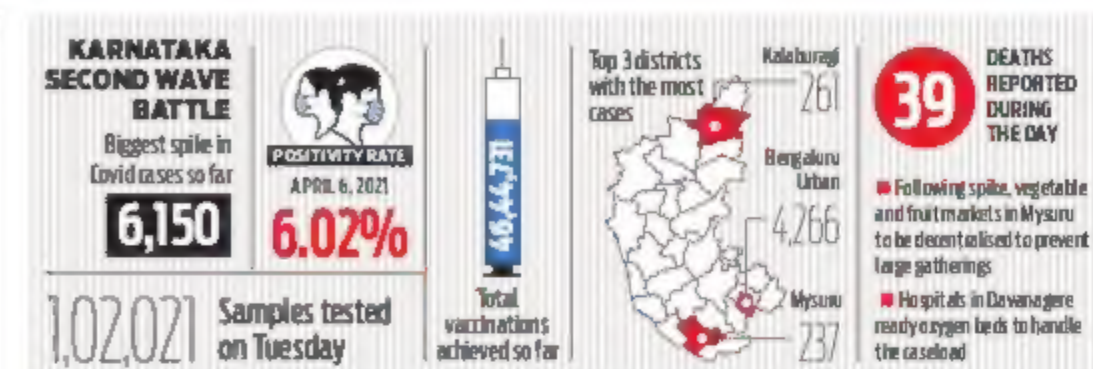
Though the Election Commission framed new rules and provided a few extra facilities to maintain social distancing — for instance, a whopping 88,937 polling booths were set up this time as against 66,316 in 2016 — there were reports from across the State of voters not using them.

This election also took a big leap in improving transparen-

cy by ensuring that VVPAT machines were installed at all polling booths, a first in Assembly elections. However, complaints about malfunctioning EVMs and VVPAT machines were reported. As many as 559 VVPAT machines, 174 ballot units, and 134 control units had to be replaced. "The failure rate was hardly one per cent, and the entire election went off peacefully," said Chief Electoral Officer Satyabrata Sahoo. P7

Puducherry clocks a robust 81.64% voting

Puducherry, which went to polls on Tuesday, witnessed 81.64 per cent polling, the Election Commission said. The Union Territory has a total of 10.04 lakh voters. Officials said that polling was brisk from the beginning, with 66 per cent of the voters having already cast their ballot till 3 pm. According to official sources, Yanam, where AINRC leader N Rangasamy is contesting, registered a higher percentage of polling than the other regions. Former CM V Narayanasamy had bowed out of the contest on the ground that he had to coordinate poll-related work in the UT. P7



In biggest spike so far, K'taka adds 6k cases

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

KARNATAKA on Tuesday recorded its highest spike of 6,150 new Covid-19 cases in the second wave, besides the highest number of deaths at 39, in a single day. All indicators are pointing to the warning issued by the Covid-19 Technical Advisory Committee that the second wave could be much harsher than the first one last year.

Over the past few days, not only are the numbers rising sharply, the active cases (those currently under treatment) too have seen a big jump. The number has risen to 45,107 now from the 6,985 cases on January 22 when the cases were on the decline. The death toll in Karnataka is now 12,696 in the one year and 28 days of the pandemic in the state after the outbreak on March 8, 2020.

Karnataka has been witnessing a daily addition upwards of 4,000 cases consistently since March 31, with Monday seeing an addition of 5,279 followed by 6,150 on Tuesday, the highest growth at 0.60 per cent in the total tally of 10,26,584 cases. The state's highest single-day addition was 10,947 cases on October 7 last year.

The state's positivity rate for the day has also risen to 6.02 per cent while the general positivity rate is 4.64 per cent, which actually went a notch higher after coming down to 4.63 per cent. That was the first time the positivity rate grew since September 27, 2020, when the first wave was at its peak and the positivity rate was 12.54 per cent.

However, the mortality rate fell a notch to 1.23 per cent, still shy of the Health Department's objective of pushing it below 1 per cent.

On the bright side, the number of discharges on Wednesday was 3,487 — the highest so far in the second wave. The total number of discharges so far is 9,68,762, marking a recovery rate of 94.36 per cent.

CONTINUED ON: P5

Age cap for vax won't be lifted soon, says govt

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

THE Centre on Tuesday warned the next four weeks are going to be very critical as the Covid-19 situation is worsening faster than it did during the first wave of the pandemic.

The Union Health Ministry also stressed the need to ramp up vaccination while indicating that the age cap for taking the jab won't be relaxed anytime soon despite demand from some states, since vaccine availability is "finite". Even Western countries have conducted vaccination in phases, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan reasoned. "The basic aim is to reduce death through vaccination. The other aim is to protect your healthcare system. The aim is never to administer the vaccine to those who want it but to those who need it."

NTI Aayog Member (Health) Dr V K Paul said Covid-appropriate behaviour, like wearing masks and staying away from crowds, have to be followed in a campaign mode. P10

EXPRESS READ

India to grow at 12.5% in 2021, says IMF

Washington: The IMF on Tuesday projected an impressive 12.5 per cent growth rate for India in 2021, stronger than that of China, the only major economy to have a positive growth rate last year during the pandemic. P13

Maha, Deshmukh move SC against HC order

New Delhi: Maharashtra government and its former home minister Anil Deshmukh moved the Supreme Court on Tuesday, challenging the Bombay High Court order directing a CBI investigation against him. P10

Woman takes poison in front of Joshi's house

Hubballi: Upset over the compensation she received towards her damaged house, a woman allegedly consumed poison in front of Union minister Pralhad Joshi's residence here on Tuesday. She has been hospitalised.



Employees of all the four state-run transport corporations will go on an indefinite strike from Wednesday | EXPRESS

Buses to go off roads in state from today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

IRKED over the State Government's refusal to bring their salaries on par with the 6th Pay Commission recommendations, around 1.30 lakh employees of all state road transport corporations in Karnataka — including BMTC — have decided to indefinitely strike work from Wednesday. However, to ensure that citizens are not inconvenienced with the major mode of commute going

off the roads, the Transport Department is making alternative arrangements.

Transport Commissioner N Shivakumar told TNE that alternative arrangements have been made. "We have requested private buses and mini-buses to operate. These buses will ply till the time the strike is called off. Children attending offline classes and office-goers could be affected, so alternative arrangements are being made to the extent possible," he said.

CONTINUED ON: P4

Tarun Bajaj is new revenue secretary, Ajay Seth in DEA

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

IN a major bureaucratic reshuffle in the Union finance ministry, the government on Wednesday appointed Economic Affairs Secretary Tarun Bajaj as Revenue Secretary and brought in Bangalore Metro chief Ajay Seth as the new secretary in the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA).

Bajaj, a 1988-batch Haryana-cadre IAS officer who has served in the PMO, has played a big role in the government's 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' package.

Seth, a 1987-batch IAS officer of the Karnataka cadre, has been the managing director of Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation since 2018. He has also served in the Health & Family Welfare and the Finance Departments in the state.

Seth is returning to central deputation after 13 years. He was an adviser with Asian Development Bank from 2004 to 2008. Prior to that, he had held the post of director in the Economic Affairs Department.

India Inc wary as US moots global minimum corp tax

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

WHILE the US is leading an international effort to create a global minimum tax on corporate profits, India Inc says the move will have not have any impact on India.

On Monday, US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen called for a global minimum tax that would apply to multinational corporations, regardless of where they locate their

headquarters. "Together, we can use a global minimum tax to make sure the global economy thrives based on a more level-playing field in the taxation of multinational corporations," she said, adding that it would prevent a "race to the bottom" in which countries cut tax to entice companies.

She said this is aimed at "making sure that govern-

ments have stable tax systems that raise sufficient revenue to invest in essential public goods and respond to crises."

With the EU and the IMF also supporting the move, experts believe countries like India that have cut tax to attract multinational companies would come under pressure to raise rates.

On September 20, 2019,

India had announced a massive tax rate cut, lowering the base corporate tax rate to 22% from 30%, and to 15% from 25% for new manufacturing companies.

However, India Inc thinks it is not an easy idea to implement. "It is easier said than done. It will be like asking countries to give up their global competitive edge," said a senior member of the Confederation of Indian Industry.



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